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MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT THE JAPANESE AMERICANS

Answering Common Misconceptions
Regarding Americans of Japanese Ancestry



U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
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MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT THE JAPANESE AMERICANS

SOURCE INFORMATION AND REFERENCES FOR USE OF WRA STAFF MEMBERS

1. **MYTH:** All children born in the United States of Japanese parents are dual citizens, and owe allegiance to Japan.

FACT: Children born in the United States of alien fathers from almost every country in the world, outside of South and Central America, are dual citizens, at least until they become of age. In the great majority of cases, they remain dual citizens for life unless they renounce allegiance to one country or the other. The Japanese law which resulted in dual citizenship for some children born of Japanese parents in the United States before the war was not at all unique and was, in fact, more liberal than the nationality law of Germany and many other nations.

Dual citizenship arises because countries apply different tests of citizenship. *Jus sanguinis* holds that a child acquires the citizenship of his father regardless of where he is born; *jus soli* holds that he acquires the citizenship of the country of his birth. Consequently, every child born in the United States (which holds to the doctrine of *jus soli* as well as *jus sanguinis* in a modified form) is a dual citizen if his father is a citizen of a country that adheres to the doctrine of *jus sanguinis*. Every American-born child of an alien father from any country in Europe is at birth a dual citizen, and in the majority of instances he

retains the dual status until he renounces his foreign citizenship. Every American-born child of an alien Chinese father is a dual citizen for life, unless he renounces allegiance to China after his twentieth birthday and has legal capacity under Chinese law. (See *A Comparative Study of Laws Relating to Nationality at Birth and Loss of Nationality*, by Durward V. Sandifer, American Journal of International Law, Vol. 29, p. 248 et seq.; *A Collection of Nationality Laws*, by Flournoy and Hudson, 1929.)

The nationality laws of Germany and Italy should be of particular interest -- more especially those of Germany. The Nazi leaders claimed the loyalty of all persons of German descent throughout the world, and constantly maintained a legal theory upon which such a claim could be based. According to the German law, every child born of a German father, regardless of the country of his birth, was a German citizen; and under a decree of April 19, 1937, every man of German parentage was subject to conscription into the Germany army, regardless of where he was born or where he was living. Persons who had expatriated, or who had naturalized in a foreign country, were not excepted by the decree.

It was even possible, under the German law effective before 1937 for a person who had acquired American citizenship by naturalization to be a German citizen as well, for the law provided that "citizenship is not lost by one who before acquiring foreign citizenship has acquired on application the written consent of competent authorities in his home state to retain his citizenship." (*A Collection of Nationality Laws*, by Flournoy and Hudson, p. 310.)

Under the Italian law, every child born in the United States of an Italian father is an

Italian citizen, and he retains dual citizenship for life unless he renounces his Italian citizenship after coming of age. Moreover, even when he renounces his Italian citizenship, he is still subject to a call for service in the Italian army, "except as regards facilities granted by special laws." (*A Collection of Nationality Laws*, p. 364.)

The magnitude of the population of German and Italian dual citizens in the United States may be judged by referring to the U. S. Census for 1940 which shows that 314,105 German aliens and 690,551 Italian aliens were then living in this country. By contrast, only 47,307 alien Japanese were enumerated in the Census. The number of German and Italian aliens would have been greatly multiplied, of course, if they, like the Japanese, were denied the right to naturalize.

Before 1924, all children born of Japanese aliens in the United States were claimed as citizens of Japan. This law was radically changed, however, by an Imperial Ordinance, effective December 1, 1924, which decreed that no child born of Japanese parents in the United States (and certain other countries) was to be claimed as a citizen of Japan unless the child's father, or legal representative, registered the birth at a Japanese consulate within fourteen days, and unless the intention to retain Japanese citizenship was expressed at the same time. (Former Ambassador Grew in *Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Military Affairs, United States Senate, 78th Congress, 1st Session*, on S. 444, p. 116.)

A comparison of nationality laws shows that Japan was almost in a class by itself before the war in its policy of relinquishing the citizenship of children born of its nationals

in the United States, unless the children were registered to preserve the dual status. This liberalization of the Japanese law resulted largely from the pressure of Japanese Americans who desired to free themselves of any legal obligation to the Imperial Government.

"The Japanese American Associations on the Pacific Coast and in Hawaii memorialized the Japanese government several times in 1919-21 for changes in the law, thus showing a genuine interest in the problem." (*The Second-Generation Japanese Problem*, by E. K. Strong, p. 141.)

One of these petitions is quoted in full in *The Real Japanese Question*, by K. K. Kawakami, p. 186-7. In part, it reads as follows:

"We are all men of Japanese parentage, born on the soil of the United States, and who have been educated in the schools of that country. We wish to be considered citizens of the country in which we are now living, and to show that men of Japanese ancestry can be as loyal to the country of their adoption as men of other ancestry residing therein...The question of dual citizenship and the criticisms which have been made against American-born Japanese have caused us to feel that some legislation should be passed by the country of our ancestors that will free us of any obligation to it, and allow those of us, who have located within the United States with the purpose and intention of remaining and interesting ourselves in the affairs of that country, to show that we can be good and loyal citizens of the country of our adoption... We respectfully petition that at the coming session of the Japanese Parliament, a law be enacted, whereby those of Japanese descent can select their own citizenship without restriction of law, and, having once made such decision, can remain citizens of that

country without any question of dual allegiance." (*The Real Japanese Question*, by K. K. Kawakami, p. 186-7.)

Even after the Ordinance of 1924 became effective, many Japanese Americans were still unsatisfied. They continued to petition for further relaxations in the law. As late as January, 1941, 30,000 Japanese Americans in Hawaii petitioned Secretary of State Cordell Hull to seek a way in which they could more easily expatriate themselves from Japan. This action brought a letter from Lieut. General C.D. Herron, commanding the Hawaiian Department of the U. S. Army, in which he said: "In the willingness of the younger Japanese to sign this petition and in their loyal and eager compliance with the draft, as in the attitude of the older generation in accepting the new (Selective Service) order for their children, there is complete refutation of the suspicions of their loyalty." (*Japanese American Review*, Jan. 25, 1941, p. 6.)

The Imperial Ordinance of 1924 permitted children born in the United States before 1924 of alien Japanese fathers to renounce their Japanese citizenship, and in the next six years, according to a census taken in 1930, approximately 40 per cent of the Nisei born before 1924 had made formal renunciations. Of the younger children, who were American citizens only unless they had been registered at Japanese consulates, about two-thirds were American citizens only. Of the total Nisei population, 24,263 held American citizenship only, and 22,027 (mainly in the older group) were dual citizens. (*The Second Generation Japanese Problem*, by Edward K. Strong, p. 142.)

This census was taken under the auspices of the Japanese government. It can hardly be

supposed, with any reasonable application of reason, that the persons questioned in the census would have falsified their answers to favor the United States. Those who held Japanese citizenship would have admitted it, presumably, without hesitation.

Investigations by the War Relocation Authority indicate that the percentage of Japanese dual citizens has been much reduced since 1930. In the registration conducted at the centers in February, 1943, many of the citizen registrants reported that they had renounced their Japanese citizenship since 1930, and few of the number born since 1924 were reported to have been registered at Japanese consulates.

* * *

2. **MYTH:** The religion of the Japanese, no matter where they live, binds them to the Emperor. They all have Shinto shrines in their homes.

FACT: The Japanese in the United States have two major religions: Buddhism and Christianity. Shintoism, among American Japanese, is a minority sect.

Buddhism, which is the predominant religion of the Orient, was introduced into Japan from Korea, about the Sixth Century, A.D. In Japan, it is divided into eight major sects which are, in turn, subdivided into almost innumerable lesser groups, each with slightly different rites and beliefs. There is no evidence that Buddhism, in any of its forms, is in any way connected with Emperor worship.

Shintoism, on the other hand, is the native religion of Japan. There are three major kinds of Shintoism. The most popular kind, which is relatively unorganized, centers around old native beliefs in gods of the household, fields,

and wayside. The second kind, which is well organized and divided into sects, often includes a belief in faith healing. The third kind is State Shintoism, which fosters a belief in the divinity of the Emperor and the purity of the Japanese race. This State Shintoism, a comparatively recent development in Japanese history, is the creed which has given rise to the accusation that all the Japanese are Emperor worshippers.

The wide difference between the older Shinto beliefs (Sectarian Shinto) and State Shintoism is emphasized in G. B. Sansom's authoritative book, entitled *Japan - A Short Cultural History*, published by the Century Company in 1931. "It is important," Sansom says (p. 53), "to distinguish from the traditional body of popular belief and observance the institutional religion which was fostered by the ruling classes. The former is a simple ritualism based on an animistic creed and tinctured with magic, the latter an organized and elaborate cult closely bound up with the political system."

There are no satisfactory figures on the number of Japanese Buddhists and Shintoists in the United States, owing partly to the fact that the religion of the common people of Japan is often a combination of Buddhism and Sectarian (not State) Shintoism. The common man believes in Buddhism for the sake of his soul, and in the Shinto gods to protect and guide him in his daily affairs.

The charge that all Japanese in the United States, or even that any considerable number of them, have Shinto shrines in their homes is a pure fabrication which has no substance at all except in the minds of the persons who concocted it.

3. **MYTH:** Japanese language schools were maintained in many communities on the West Coast before the war to inculcate American-born Japanese with the national ideals of the Japanese Imperial Government.

FACT: This charge is not supported by the studies conducted by various American educators before the war to determine the purpose and effect of the Japanese-language schools. Dr. E. K. Strong of Stanford University, who supervised the most intensive study ever made of second-generation Japanese Americans, under a \$40,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation in 1929, arrived at the conclusion that these schools were making a valuable contribution to American community life. The following extracts are from his book. "The Second-Generation Japanese Problem," published by the Stanford University Press in 1934.

"Many non-English-speaking people who have come to America have established private schools where their children may learn the parents' native language and some of the history, traditions, and customs of their native land. The Japanese have been no exception to this practice." (p. 201.)

"Some knowledge of Japanese appears desirable for all the second generation... Such facility is needed in order to insure proper morale within the family and the Japanese group. It is this relationship which is seemingly so largely responsible for the low rate of juvenile delinquency." (p. 205. NOTE: The Japanese Americans had the lowest juvenile delinquency rate of any racial or nationality group on the West Coast before the war. Ibid, p. 175 et seq.)

"The work of the Japanese-language schools should be continued." (p. 205)

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Quotations from other authors:

"...These schools are not intended to perpetuate the...moral concepts of Japan. They are supplementary schools, and at worst there is much less in them to be adversely criticised than in the parochial schools attended by so many children of South and East European immigrants."

(The Japanese Problem in the United States, by Prof. H. A. Millis, pp. 265-66)

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"The strongest objection which has been raised in this country towards the language schools of the Japanese has been that they foster anti-American ideas. This accusation is without basis. Sociology and Social Research, Jan.-Feb., 1933, p. 259.)

.....

"Similar schools have been conducted by the Chinese; and also by the Germans and many other nationalities in the form of parochial schools. The Japanese schools are merely supplementary to the public schools and not a substitute for them as are the parochial schools." (Orientals in American Life, by Albert W. Palmer, 1934, p. 51.)

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A better proof of the falsity of the charge is the fact that the Army and Navy have recruited hundreds of graduates of the Japanese-language schools to act as interpreters and teachers of the language. The relocation centers have been combed for them, and the supply has never equalled the demand.

Many of the recruits are now serving in the Pacific Theatre of war, and wherever they

have been assigned, they have established an outstanding record of loyalty and devotion to duty.

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4. **MYTH:** It was a common practise among families of Japanese origin to send their children to school in Japan, where they were trained for espionage and sabotage.

FACT: Prof. E. K. Strong of Stanford University, who supervised the most thoroughgoing scientific study ever made of the Japanese Americans before the war, wrote in 1934:

"The United States-born have received their education primarily in this country... The fact that only 13 per cent of the second generation have received part or all of their schooling in Japan, coupled with the fact that this preference for Japanese culture is gradually dying out, tends to disprove the contention that 'large numbers of Japanese children...return [from Japan] at a later date loyal and ideal Japanese citizens'." (The Second-Generation Japanese Problem, p. 188).

A WRA study of all American-born citizens of Japanese descent, who were evacuated to relocation centers, showed that 72.7 per cent of them had never been to Japan. Another 14.4 per cent, though they had visited the Orient, had received no schooling there. Only 12.2 per cent had attended school in Japan for three years, or more. (Note agreement with Prof. Strong's percentage.)

These figures clearly show that the practice of sending children to Japan for schooling had almost ceased before the outbreak of the war.

Of the total number of relocation center residents who had studied in Japan for three years or more, 26.8 per cent were 40 years of age, or older. Their Japanese schooling had been received before the military clique gained power by assassinating and otherwise overpowering the liberal leaders who prevailed in the Japanese government prior to 1930.

The study further revealed that many young men returned to America to avoid service in the Japanese army, and that many were serving with the Army of the United States in all theaters from Burma and the Philippines to Italy and the Western Front.

To support the charge that American-born Japanese have aided the enemy, the rumor has been circulated that Japanese airmen, forced down in Hawaii during the attack on Pearl Harbor, were found wearing Hawaiian high school rings and carrying Honolulu street car tokens. This rumor was checked by Robert J. Casey, of the Chicago Daily News, who arrived in Honolulu one week after the attack. He interviewed the Navy surgeon in charge of all enemy wounded, who had examined some eight corpses taken from the plane wreckage. According to Casey's report, the surgeon said, "I've heard that story. But I never saw any rings. I never saw any street car tokens. None of the pilots had much of anything in his pockets. None wore any jewelry. Only one had a watch."

* * *

5. **MYTH:** The Japanese in California deliberately concentrated in strategic areas to be near important military installations.

FACT: The vast majority of the Japanese who

lived near important military installations when the war began, had been settled in the same localities long before they became military sites.

"...The main geographic pattern of Japanese population was fixed many years ago with reference to economic, social and soil conditions. Limited occupational outlets and social pressures encouraged their concentration near their initial points of entry on the Pacific Coast. That these points may now be near certain strategic military and industrial areas is no proof of a diabolical purpose on the part of Japanese Americans." (U. S. Supreme Court Justice Murphy, in *Korematsu vs. the United States*, p. 19.)

They concentrated around the peripheries of large cities to be near markets for their truck crops, along main highways where they could operate vegetable stands, and in the vicinity of vegetable-packing plants. (See *Prejudice*, by Carey McWilliams, p. 84.)

The statement has often been made to support the charge that they settled purposefully in strategic areas, that approximately 72 per cent of the California Japanese lived in seven counties: Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Francisco, Alameda, Fresno, San Joaquin, and Santa Clara. Those who have used the statement have usually failed, however, to add that more than two-thirds of the entire population of California lived in those same counties.

In 1940, these seven counties were inhabited by more than 75 per cent of the foreign-born Germans in the State, and 79 per cent of the German aliens. In the same counties lived 68 per cent of the foreign-born Italians, and 87 per cent of the Italian aliens.

Two communities are frequently cited to support the allegation that the Japanese chose important military sites for colonizations: (1) Terminal Island, and (2) the San Francisco-Oakland bay region.

The settlement of Japanese fishermen on Terminal Island began in 1901 and increased until 1907 when it was rather abruptly halted by the "Gentlemen's Agreement." Thereafter, the colony grew mainly as a result of the immigration of the parents, wives, and minor children of the fishermen already there. By 1917, it had arrived close to its maximum development. Roosevelt Naval Base and Reeves Field, which have given military significance to the island, were not established until long afterward.

The total population of foreign-born Japanese in the San Francisco-Oakland metropolitan district in 1940 was 4,676. In the same area lived 24,387 foreign-born Germans and 42,861 foreign-born Italians.

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6. **MYTH:** There is no way to distinguish loyal Japanese Americans from the disloyal. Even those who profess loyalty may be secretly disloyal.

FACT: There is no way to distinguish the loyalty of any person, regardless of ancestry, except by his words and deeds. Unquestionably, loyal words sometimes mask disloyal hearts. Gerhard William Kunze, the notorious German Bund leader who was sentenced to fifteen years in prison for obtaining military information for Germany and Japan, stoutly proclaimed his loyalty to the United States. "We're one hundred per cent American," he declared, referring

to the Bund. "The only purpose of the Bund is to make better Americans of those of German blood." (*Under Cover*, by John Roy Carlson, p. 46.) William Dudley Pelley, equally notorious leader of the Silver Shirts who was also sentenced to fifteen years in prison, consistently maintained that he was heart and soul for America.

John S. Farnsworth, who received a four year sentence for giving aid to Japan, was a former Lieutenant Commander in the United States Navy. (*Betrayal from the East*, by Alan Hynd, pp. 62, 91.) Harry Thomas Thompson, sentenced to fifteen years, was a former yeoman in the United States Navy. (*Ibid*, pp. 51, 86.) Ralph Townsend, also convicted, was a former American consular official. (*Under Cover*, pp. 413, 414.) Joseph Hilton Smyth, sentenced to seven years, was a scion of an old Puritan family of Plymouth, Mass. (*Betrayal from the East*, pp. 246, 255.) Mrs. Velvalee Dickinson, sentenced to ten years, had been born, raised, and educated in California. (N. Y. Times, July 29, Aug. 15, 1944.) These persons were all convicted of giving aid to Japan. Others convicted of the same offense were Walker Grey Matheson, David Ryder, Frederick Vincent Williams, and Arthur Clifford Read. All had posed as good Americans before they were convicted. None of these names has a Japanese origin. There is no comparable case involving any person of Japanese descent.

There have been notably few convictions of Japanese Americans for violations of any of the provisions of the wartime national security laws. In July, 1942, six months before the evacuees were questioned regarding their loyalties, Tsutomu Obana was sentenced to serve from two to six months for failing to comply with the Foreign Agents Registration Act; and in

August, 1944, three Japanese American girls (the Shitarn sisters) were convicted of aiding two German war prisoners to escape in Colorado. The light sentence given to Obana is evidence that the court did not consider him a serious offender. In the latter case, Federal Judge J. Foster Symes declared that, after listening to all the evidence, he "did not believe that the defendants had any intent to harm the United States or help the German government." (*Denver Post*, Aug. 11, 1944.) The only other convictions have been in cases involving the National Selective Service law, or testing the constitutionality of the evacuation and military curfew orders.

On the other hand, thousands of Japanese American boys have proved their loyalty to the United States by serving against the enemy in every theater of war, and no unit in the Army of the United States has won higher praise than the 100th Infantry Battalion, composed almost entirely of Americans of Japanese descent. The 442nd Combat Regiment of Japanese Americans, with which the 100th Battalion was joined on the battle front in June, 1944, has also set a remarkable record for excellent performance and gallantry in action. It has received two Distinguished Unit Citations from the President, and 64 divisional citations. Members of the unit have been awarded more than 3000 Purple Hearts, and in April, 1945, they had won 31 Distinguished Service Crosses, 183 Silver Stars, and 218 Bronze Stars. In the late spring of 1945, War Department records showed that more than 20,000 Japanese Americans had been inducted into the Army of the United States, and other thousands have proved their loyalty by buying War Bonds, giving blood to the Red Cross, salvaging scrap iron and paper, and helping to save vital wartime crops.

7. **MYTH:** A large percentage of the people in the relocation centers have refused to swear allegiance to the United States.

FACT: In February and March, 1943, the War Relocation Authority and the Army conducted a joint registration at the relocation centers, which involved asking every resident, eighteen years of age or older, to answer a series of questions. Question No. 28 was phrased for the citizens as follows: "Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and foreswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese Emperor or any other foreign government, power, or organization?"

It was recognized that the question could not be worded in the same manner for the aliens, who are compelled to remain aliens by our naturalization laws, without asking them to become men without a country. Therefore, for them it was worded as follows: "Will you swear to abide by the laws of the United States and to take no action which would in any way interfere with the war effort of the United States?"

Of the 74,466 persons who replied to the question in one form or the other, 87 per cent answered it with an unqualified "yes."

The experiences of evacuation, loss of property, and several months in relocation centers had embittered many of the people and made them highly suspicious of the motives of the Government. Many of them suspected that the registration was some sort of a trick to put them to further distress. This sentiment was especially evident in the qualified answers to Question No. 28 -- answers such as "Yes, if my civil rights are restored", "No, not until the Government recognizes my rights under the Constitution."

As the purpose of the procedure became better understood, many people who had answered "no" to Question No. 28 or who had qualified their answers, expressed a desire to change them. These changes were permitted, and on April 25, 1944 (when the last tabulation was made), more than 90 per cent of all registrants had answered "yes" to Question No. 28, without qualification.

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8. **MYTH:** Less than 2 per cent of the Japanese American population of the United States mainland and Hawaii has been inducted into military service, while more than 10 per cent of the total population has been inducted.

FACT: This myth, given currency by the Hood River (Oregon) Post of The American Legion, is discredited by the following figures:

| POPULATION U.S. MAINLAND & HAWAII Census of 1940 | | INDUCTED INTO ARMY U.S. MAINLAND & HAWAII War Department Records Through Feb. 28, 1945 | PERCENTAGE |
|--|-------------|---|------------|
| Japanese | | | |
| Americans | 284,852 | 19,276 | 6.7 |
| All | | | |
| ancestries | 132,092,605 | 9,600,000 (Approx.) | 7.2 |

Actually the difference is only about one half of one per cent, in spite of the fact that the Nisei were almost wholly excluded from induction under Selective Service procedures for a period of more than two years following Pearl Harbor.

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. **MYTH:** Nisei soldiers are not used in the Pacific theater because the Army does not

trust them to fight against the Japanese.

FACT: Japanese Americans are serving with the United States Army in every battle area of the Pacific and in Burma. The news items, listed below, have been selected from many newspaper accounts of Nisei service in the Pacific, to indicate how widely they are scattered.

IWO JIMA

"WITH THE MARINES ON IWO, Feb. 28... Two groups of Nisei landed with the Marines on Iwo Island -- one each with the 4th and 5th Division." (Chicago Sun, March 3, 1945.)

LEYTE, KWAJALEIN, ENIWETOK

"UNITED STATES ARMY PACIFIC HEADQUARTERS, Feb. 16 (AP). Frank T. Hachiya, one of the 16 Japanese whose names have been stricken from the county memorial roll by the Hood River (Oreg.) American Legion Post, died while performing a dangerous volunteer mission, the Army reported yesterday:

"Hachiya, attached to the 7th Division, was wounded fatally on Leyte. Dec. 30. He died January 3 after most of the men in this regiment volunteered to give him blood transfusions...

"He had served through the Kwajalein and Eniwetok invasions." (Washington Star, Feb. 16, 1945.)

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NEW GUINEA, ADMIRALTY ISLANDS, LEYTE, MANILA

"MANILA....Ernie is a Japanese, a Nisei born in Los Angeles...One of the first 26 Nisei to be sent to this theater, Ernie has

**Editor's Note: Hachiya's name was not among those stricken from the roll, although he is a native of Hood River and attended High School there.*

been overseas for 26 months...He has been through the New Guinea, Admiralty Islands and Léyte campaigns." (Los Angeles Times, March 5, 1945.)

SAIPAN

"WITH THE UNITED STATES 3rd FLEET IN THE PACIFIC....I'm reminded of one [Japanese American] named Kubo, a sergeant in the Army of the United States who served on Saipan... There came a time in those cruel, heart-breaking and incredible days, while the Americans were trying to round up Jap civilians, when Kubo proved his Americanism." (Milwaukee Journal, Jan. 28, 1945.)

BURMA

"Ten thousand American-born children of Japanese immigrants fight now in the United States Army and some in this Theater. Their presence in CBI was for a long time a military secret. For their own protection they were not publicized ...there always was and still always will be the possibility of capture by the enemy, which for the Nisei would mean no picnic.

"Under the veil of protective secrecy, however, stubborn, sturdy fighting Niseis grew to the stature of heroes."

(C.B.I. Roundup, a weekly newspaper of the United States Army Forces, published by and for the men in China, Burma and India, Sept. 14, 1944.)

BOUGAINVILLE, SOLOMON ISLANDS

"The Soldier's Medal is awarded to Master Sgt. Susumu Toyoda for heroism and bravery near Torokina, Bougainville, British Solomon Islands, on June 29, 1944." (Extract from War Department citation.)

SOUTH PACIFIC

"These Japanese are Americans - American-born Nisei and soldiers in the U.S. Army, who have been serving with Marine detachments in the Pacific islands..."

"They have the respect of the Marines because they are good American soldiers and we realized the risks they are exposed to, in event they are captured by the enemy," said Lt. Newell..."

(Chicago Daily News, April 19, 1944; interview with Marine Lieutenant Robert J. Newell.)

ATTU, ALEUTIAN ISLANDS

"Japanese soldiers of American birth, in addition to fighting Nazis in Italy, have fought against Nipponese soldiers in the Pacific theater of war, it was disclosed Wednesday.

"Sgt. Kunihiro Nakao, a Japanese American formerly of Sacramento, Calif...arrived at the war relocation center at Heart Mountain as a veteran of hand-to-hand combat at Attu."

(Denver Post, Oct. 13, 1943.)

NEW GUINEA

"T/3 Ken Omura, Seattle-born Japanese, was drowned in New Guinea, March 19, while on active duty in the Army."

(Seattle Post-Intelligencer, April 15, 1944.)

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10. **MYTH:** After the war began, not a single Japanese American gave information against any member of his race to the United States Intelligence agencies.

FACTS: This charge has been refuted many

times by authorities in full possession of the facts. The Fourth Interim Report of the Tolan Committee (p.152 et seq.) contains various references to the assistance given by Japanese Americans to the FBI, Naval Intelligence, and Military Intelligence. The truth about the charge is well presented in a statement by Dr. Galen Fisher in the Christian Century of August 18, 1943, P. 937.

"It has been loosely charged that the Nisei have not aided the authorities in discovering dangerous Japanese residents. The falsity of these allegations have been proved by intelligence officers both in Hawaii and on the mainland, as well as by informed civilians. It is true that the great majority of the Nisei did not give such aid, and the same could presumably be said of German-Americans. The chief reason is that most of them had no information to give, any more than most white citizens....Let some of the intelligence officers speak for themselves. On August 10, 1942, one wrote me:

"I personally know at least fifteen intelligence officers who have received continual aid from the group of loyal and patriotic Nisei attached to each, and have in consequence been of great service to the United States in obtaining information regarding disloyal and suspicious Japanese. There are innumerable cases that I could give you."

.....

"Many of the Nisei voluntarily contributed valuable anti-subversive information to this (intelligence agency) and other governmental agencies. The Japanese consular staff, the Central Japanese Association,

and others known to be sympathetic to the Japanese did not themselves trust the Nisei."

(An anonymous intelligence officer in Harper's Magazine, Oct. 1942.)

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"Common gossip out here was that not one Japanese had informed on another. On the highest authority I was assured that the contrary was true, and that many patriotic Japanese have turned in suspects of their own race and even of their own families."

(Joseph Driscoll in the N.Y. Herald-Tribune, Jan. 31, 1943.)

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11. *MYTH*: During the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Hawaiian Japanese blocked the roads, signaled the attackers, and engaged in numerous other activities to assist the enemy and hamper the defenders.

FACT: "There were no acts of sabotage in the city and county of Honolulu December 7, nor have there been any reported to the police department since that date. Police department had charge of traffic on Pearl Harbor road from Pearl Harbor to Honolulu shortly after bombing started with several officers on duty there. There was no deliberate blocking of traffic during December 7 or following that date by unauthorized persons."

(Cablegram from Honolulu Chief of Police Gabrielson to Tolan Committee, March 14, 1942.)

.....

"There have been no known acts of sabo-

tage, espionage or fifth column activity committed by the Japanese in Hawaii either on or subsequent to December 7, 1941."

(Col. Kendall J. Fielder, Chief of Military Intelligence, Hawaiian Department; the Christian Century, Aug. 18, 1943, p. 937)

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"Mr. John Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, has informed me that there was no sabotage committed there (in Hawaii) prior to December 7, on December 7, or subsequent to that time."

(Assistant Attorney-General Rowe, April 20, 1942; Tolán Committee, *Fourth Interim Report*, p. 49)

.....

"The War Department has received no information of sabotage committed by Japanese during the attack on Pearl Harbor."

(Hon. Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, March 30, 1942; Tolán Committee, *Fourth Interim Report*, p. 48).

.....

"Where were the Japanese on that Sunday (December 7), if they were not sabotaging? Hundreds of them were actively helping defend the territory, as members of the Oahu Citizens Defense Committee. Volunteer truck drivers, they rushed to their assembly points, stripped their delivery trucks of their contents, inserted frames prepared to hold four stretchers, and went tearing out to Pearl Harbor to take the wounded to hospitals. Some of these Japa-

nese got there so promptly that their trucks were hit by flying shrapnel or machine gun bullets from the road-strafting Jap planes. The presence of the Japanese drivers and their scarred and pock-marked trucks undoubtedly gave rise to the rumor that guns had been employed to clear the highway of Japs who were blocking the road to Pearl Harbor."

(Nelson Pringle, CBS broadcaster,
Oct. 5, 1942.)

.....

"All the indications are that there was no sabotage at Pearl Harbor, according to all the evidence..."

(Hon. John M. Costello, former Congressman from California and member of the Dies Committee; Bulletin of America's Town Meeting of the Air, July 15, 1943, p. 19.)

* * *

12. **MYTH:** The Army evacuated all persons of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast because they were considered, as a group, to be disloyal and dangerous to the National security.

FACT: This charge is most effectively answered by the action of the War Department in lifting the West Coast exclusion orders, on January 2, 1945, and clearing the great majority of the evacuees to return to their homes without further investigation or hindrance of any kind. Regardless of the reasons which made mass evacuation appear to be a military necessity in early 1942, the rescinding of the exclusion orders is indisputable evidence that the War Department, after careful study, arrived at the conclusion that only a small number of the

evacuees were questionable from the standpoint of the national security.

* * *

13. **MYTH:** The Japanese race is fundamentally dishonest, secretive and generally untrustworthy.

FACT: In 1933, Stanford University Press published the results of an extensive study, supervised by Dr. E. K. Strong, Jr., Professor of Psychology, to ascertain the "educational and occupational opportunities offered to American citizens of Oriental races." This study was financed by a \$40,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and it included the only thorough, scientific investigation ever made into the honesty of the Japanese in California. The conclusion drawn from the study reads as follows:

"As far as these results go..., they give no warrant for claiming that the Japanese as a class are more dishonest than Americans. There are undoubtedly rascals in both groups. The most extreme conclusion which could be based on these data would be to claim two or three per cent more dishonest Japanese than Americans, on the ground that poor credit ratings mean dishonesty. The more conservative conclusion is that the differences in credit ratings represent inexperience far more than dishonesty, and that, all in all, the differences between Japanese and whites are too slight to be considered significant." (*Vocational Aptitudes of Second-Generation Japanese in the United States*, p. 154.)

.....

"Adaptability is an important trait, possibly the most important, in earning a living. The two rough measures of it, in terms of de-

linquency-crime and honesty, indicate that the Japanese are superior in this respect to many immigrant groups who have come to this country." (Ibid, p. 177).

The experience of WRA officials who have interviewed Japanese Americans on matters relating to loyalty, and who have studied the results of the interviews, has indicated that, instead of being dishonest and secretive, they are surprisingly frank and naive. Information obtained from them regarding visits to Japan, dual citizenship, and former employment, tallied almost in every instance with information collected by the F.B.I. and Army and Navy intelligence agencies.

* * *

14. **MYTH:** The birth rate of the Japanese in America is much higher than that of other Americans. They multiply at an alarming rate.

FACT: The U.S. Census, 1940 shows that the birth rate among Japanese Americans in every state on the West Coast was lower than the birth rate of the general population, including people of all ancestries.

| | BIRTH RATE AMONG JAPANESE AMERICANS | BIRTH RATE OF TOTAL POPULATION, ALL ANCESTRIES |
|-----------------|--|--|
| California | 15.8 per thousand | 16.1 per thousand |
| Oregon | 15.5 per thousand | 16.4 per thousand |
| Washington | 11.7 per thousand | 16.2 per thousand |

Census figures show, further, that the number of Japanese American births has been decreasing steadily since 1920.

| | NUMBER OF BIRTHS IN 1920 | NUMBER OF BIRTHS IN 1930 | NUMBER OF BIRTHS IN 1940 |
|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| California | 5,032 | 2,224 | 1,480 |
| Oregon | 219 | 75 | 63 |
| Washington | 1,160 | 375 | 171 |

"Their birth rate during the past decade has been insufficient to balance mortality and emigration." (Tolan *Fourth Interim Report*, p. 91.)

* * *

15. **MYTH:** The Japanese cannot be Americanized or assimilated into American life. They congregate in "Little Tokyos" to preserve their Japanese culture.

FACT: "To the extent that assimilation is a problem, it is largely the result of certain social conditions and laws of the American general public. Studies demonstrate that the persons of Japanese descent are readily susceptible to integration in our society if given the opportunity." (U.S. Supreme Court Justice Murphy, in *Korematsu vs. the United States*, p. 18.)

.....

"The word 'assimilation' has two meanings," as David Starr Jordan, President of Stanford University, pointed out at the hearings of the U.S. Immigration Committee in 1924—"interbreeding and the comprehension of political and social conditions." There has been very little intermarriage between the Japanese and Caucasians in the western states; as a matter of fact, in three of the states where they were

mainly concentrated (Arizona, California, and Washington), it has been prohibited by law. In the "comprehension of political and social conditions," however, Dr. Jordan stated that "*the young Japanese are more readily assimilated than people of several European races.*" (*Hearings before the Immigration Committee, U.S. Senate, 68th Congress, First Session, p. 60*).

.....

This point of view had been strongly supported, some years earlier, by the Immigration Commission appointed in 1907 to "make full inquiry, examination, and investigation...into the subject of immigration." Composed of three senators, three representatives, and three laymen appointed by the President, the Commission published its findings in 42 volumes. Volume 25, published in 1911, is entitled, *Japanese and Other Immigrant Races in the Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountain States*.

"...When compared with other races employed in similar kinds of labor in the same industry," the report stated (p. 149), "the Japanese show relatively rapid progress in acquiring a speaking knowledge of English. Their advance has been much more rapid than that of the Chinese and Mexicans, who show little interest in 'American' institutions. During their first five years of residence a greater proportion have learned to speak English than most of the South and East European races... *The progress of the Japanese is due to their great eagerness to learn, which has overcome more obstacles than have been encountered by most of the other races, obstacles of race prejudice, of segregation, and of wide differences in language.*"

.....

More recent confirmation of the same viewpoint is contained in Dr. Edward K. Strong's book, entitled "The Second-Generation Japanese Problem", based on an extensive study of the subject under a \$40,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation. This book was published in 1934.

Dr. Strong states that authorities agree, almost without exception, that second- and certainly third-generation Japanese have the mental qualities necessary for cultural assimilation. He, too, "agrees with most authorities that the Japanese have the necessary capacity." On the other hand, he states that "cultured assimilation is never accomplished by any first generation." (p. 27.)

.....

Many other immigrant people, limited in ability to speak the English language, have congregated in separate communities. New York, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, and other cities have had -- and still have, to some extent -- colonies of Italians, Poles, Russians, and other nationalities. The midwest has had its rural settlements of Scandinavians and Germans. They gathered together to have neighbors whose language and customs they understood, and for economic reasons. These reasons, also influenced the colonization of the Japanese, who were frequently not welcomed in other communities.

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"Segregation of immigrants is certainly not peculiar to the Japanese, but is a rule of immigrant settlement....Where colour is added to culture as a distinguishing characteristic of the newcomer, it provides a further incentive for the members of the group to segregate

and to act as a unit." (The Japanese Canadians, by Young and Reid, p. 24)

.....

At the time of the evacuation, in 1942, the "Little Tokyos" on the West Coast were already on the wane. According to Carey McWilliams (Prejudice, p. 88), "As the Nisei reached maturity, there was a significant trend away from Little Tokyo. In 1928 one observer reported that, in Los Angeles, there were 203 Japanese-operated fruit stands, 292 grocery stores, 74 florist shops, 69 nurseries, 108 restaurants, and 68 dry-cleaning establishments which had most of their dealings with non-Japanese customers. Over a period of years there was unquestionably a slow but steady expansion out of Little Tokyo."

A similar trend was noted by Young and Reid (*The Japanese Canadians*, p. 72) in a careful study conducted in British Columbia. In Vancouver, the authors state, "the Japanese are found in commercial enterprises in significant numbers not only in their own areas of settlement where, incidentally, they cater to Whites as well as Japanese, but also to a remarkable extent all over the city where their only customers are Whites."

Another statement in the same book (p. 145), which was published in 1938 "under the auspices of The Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene and The Canadian Institute of International Affairs", is unquestionably as true of the conditions that prevailed on the West Coast of the United States as it was of the conditions in British Columbia: "The second generation of the Japanese Canadians, in spite of what their critics may say to the contrary and in spite of what their parents may do

to have it otherwise, are no more Japanese than their parents are Canadian. They live in our houses, wear our clothes, eat our food, attend our schools, speak our language, read our books, join our churches, go to our movies, play our sports, sing our songs, and salute our flags. Since they do these things, and since they are human and therefore are affected by the experience, it is a denial of the obvious to ignore the fact that they are in the process of becoming Canadian."

.....

Competent observers on the reception of Nisei in Japan have remarked on their lack of welcome there, and on their failure to adjust themselves to Oriental life. (See *The Rising Sun of Japan*, by Randau and Zugsmith, p. 99-100 *The Japanese Canadians*, p. 146.)

The Americanization of the Nisei is especially evident in their school achievements. They are eager for education.

"Although they come from an economic level appreciably lower than that of the white American students, a much higher percentage of them attend the universities and colleges." (Christendom, Vol. VII, No. 2, p. 201.)

"The Japanese immigrants...take advantage of the opportunities presented by educational institutions to an extent probably unsurpassed by any other immigrant group..." (*The Japanese Canadians*, p. 132.)

Many of them have won good citizenship awards, scholarships, and other scholastic honors; they have been elected to class offices and important positions in the student bodies; they have starred in American sports. (See

Brief of Japanese American Citizens League, Korematsu Case, pp. 161, 162, 163, 164.) Many have achieved high recognition in the arts and sciences.

The final and most conclusive proof, however, is the remarkable record of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which rescued the "Lost Battalion" in France, and has set a record of gallantry unsurpassed by any other unit in the Army of the United States. (*See Nisei in Uniform.*)

* * *

18. **MYTH:** The presence of Japanese workers in any community lowers the standard of living since they work for lower wages and are content to live in hovels.

FACT: The living standard of any people regardless of race or ancestry, is determined, in a large measure, by their opportunities to make a decent living. *The Fourth Interim Report of the Tolan Committee* (pp. 62 to 72) clearly shows that the Japanese in California were constantly striving to overcome the many handicaps that forced them, when they first arrived as immigrants, to accept low wages or starve. "Very few Japanese were employed as skilled workers in factories or workshops; there was a plentiful supply of other immigrants to fill such positions; their inability to understand English required their working in groups under an interpreter; they were opposed by labor unions... Most of the Japanese who did not become domestics worked in the railroads, in canneries, lumber mills, mines, farms, and various city trades." After 1909, however, the number of Japanese in nomadic, low-paying employment began to decrease, owing to their inclination, the Tolan Report states, "to shift to occupations which offered a less nomadic

existence, greater profit, or independent status." (p. 63.) "Many of the Japanese gradually left the industries into which they had originally been dispersed. *In search of higher earnings, more satisfactory living conditions, and occupations to which they were better adapted by natural bent and experience, they tended to seek the level which they had enjoyed in their native land.* (p. 64.)

Many authoritative references may be cited to show that the West Coast Japanese were constantly striving to raise the wage scale in the industries that employed them:

"...The Japanese club secretaries, camp managers, and bosses became successful bargainers, authorized to speak for the whole body of men they represented, familiar with prevailing wage rates in the region and for the particular crop. Under their direction, through strikes and boycotts, particularly at harvest time, the Japanese were able to secure wage increases until their rates equaled and surpassed those of white workers." (*Tolan Report*, p. 67.)

"They (the Japanese) have reduced the work-day from 12 to 11 hours and by means of strikes *have raised the wages of all races.*" (*Prejudice*, p. 93)

As they obtained better incomes which enabled them to acquire a few dollars more than necessary to finance a bare existence, they sought better homes and better opportunities for their children.

"Most of the Japanese families are of course living in homes built for them as tenants or laborers and these are usually no better than those erected elsewhere to serve the same purpose. With land ownership, better homes are

built..." (*The Japanese Problem in the United States* (1915), by H. A. Millis, p. 164.)

.....

"...As the Japanese got ahead and could afford to do so, he also moderated his habits of excessive toil. If he owned land, he built a little bungalow, gave his children music lessons and planned to send them to college.

"The writer has in his possession two very interesting and contrasting snap-shots which he took in the summer of 1933. One is a rough shack inhabited by a Japanese family at one end and used as a barn at the other, with a vegetable and packing room between. The second picture shows an attractive modern bungalow, which had a well-kept garden and a gold-fish pond, and, behind it, a large well-painted fruit-packing house. The two pictures represent two stages of Japanese development. The first is where they began and the second is where they wish to go." (*Orientalism in American Life*, by Albert W. Palmer, pp. 55-56.)

.....

"That the standard of living of the Japanese will at least equal that of the White groups in a comparatively short time is indicated by the rapid progress already made by the Japanese... The remarkable advances of the standard of living of the group since the beginning of the century... is evidenced by the standard of living of the Japanese at the present time... There is conclusive evidence of economic and social progress on the part of the Japanese. (*The Japanese Canadians*, pp. 79, 80, 81.)

* * *

17. **MYTH:** Japanese Americans are mainly stoop laborers and domestic workers.

FACT: The 1940 Census reported 43,691 paid workers of Japanese descent fourteen years of age or older, in California, Oregon, and Washington. There were 8,307 paid farm laborers, who were probably employed for the most part, in stoop labor jobs in the vegetable and small fruit industries.

The farm operators and managers, who may have been engaged in some stoop labor but who were primarily in the same classification with farmers of other races, numbered 7,001. There were 3,541 domestic workers in the three states.

On the other hand, 5,512 persons were employed in clerical, sales and kindred occupations. There were 5,491 proprietors, managers, and officials of business enterprises; 3,517 operatives and kindred workers in various types of industries; and 1,157 professional workers. They were engaged in the manufacture of lumber, furniture, paper, chemicals, petroleum and coal products, leather goods, iron and steel, machinery, and many other articles of commerce. Nearly 5,000 were employed in food and dairy products stores; 1,478 worked at laundering, cleaning, and dyeing; 1,335 worked in hotels and lodging houses.

In other words, census figures show that nearly three-quarters of the paid workers, including both Issei and Nisei, were employed in a wide range of occupations not classified as either farm labor or domestic work.

Immigrants from Japan, before they became adjusted to life in America, were employed almost exclusively as low-grade laborers and menials. As they became acquainted with Ameri-

can ways, however, they sought to improve their economic position. Probably no other group of immigrants confronted with so many obstacles at outset, has equaled the progress of the Japanese in adapting themselves to the wide scope of American industry and commerce.

* * *

18. **MYTH:** American farmers of European descent can not compete with farmers of Japanese descent. Wherever the Japanese congregate, the Caucasian farmers are forced out.

FACT: The Report of the U.S. Immigration Commission, the Tolan Report, and many other authoritative references state that the Japanese Americans engaged mainly in growing crops that were not extensively grown by Caucasian farmers. No real competition could exist under these conditions. There is also plentiful proof that, in those areas where the Japanese Americans were chiefly congregated, they were pioneers in farming virgin land, or land that was not wanted by Caucasian farmers.

"Nearly all of the Japanese farming is of the intensive type, requiring much care and hand-work. It is of the kind the market places a premium upon, but which the ordinary American farmer is slow to engage in." (*The Japanese Problem in the United States*, by Prof. H. A. Millis, pp. 89-90.)

.....

"There can be no doubt that the extensive leasing by them (the Japanese) about Newcastle and in a few other localities has caused prospective settlers to locate elsewhere, and the white population in some neighborhoods has actually diminished... But it should be noted in this connection that in some communities much of the land leased was reclaimed and reduced to

cultivation by Japanese, or was first devoted to intensive farming by them... The instances where the prices realized for crops have been adversely affected as a result of Japanese competition are comparatively few. As a matter of fact, where their acreage has been added to that productively used in the community, it has generally been devoted to growing crops not extensively grown by white farmers." (Report of U.S. Immigration Commission, Part 25, Vol. 1, pp. 86-87.)

"They (the Japanese) were engaged chiefly in raising sugar beets in Utah, Colorado, and Idaho, berries and vegetables in Washington and Oregon, and in California varied intensive crops -- vegetables, berries, deciduous fruits, grapes, melons, and hops. The specialization of Japanese farmers was extreme." (Tolan Committee, Fourth Interim Report, p. 69)

.....

"The concentration (in the production of vegetables, berries, and small fruits) resulted from a trial-and-error experimentation with other types of agriculture... By 1930, they (the Japanese) had abandoned almost every other type of agriculture. Experience had shown that they could not compete successfully in other types of farming." (Prejudice, by Carey McWilliams, p. 86)

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In the March 1, 1924 issue of the Country Gentlemen, the leading article, by Robert Welles Ritchie, discussed the Japanese problem in California, "scrupulously avoiding any controversial bias" according to the author's declaration. This paragraph appears in it:

"The three areas of greatest Japanese con-

centration then (in 1920), as now, were in the cantaloupe and winter-lettuce fields of the Imperial Valley, in the extreme southeastern part of the state; in the mountain fruit center of Placer County; and in the strawberry fields, and the potato, celery, onion, and asparagus districts roughly embraced in the term, the Delta, which lies in the exact center of the state. Let us be very blunt in this context and say that in the Imperial Valley and the Delta country the Japanese never displaced white men, for white men would not work there; and in the mountain fruit district the Chinese, and after them the Japanese, came in -- after nearly every white man had quit -- and made a go of a crippled industry."

.....

"No small part of the acreage now controlled by the Japanese in Oregon has been 'taken wild' and reduced to cultivation. This is especially true in the vicinity of Hood River...." (*The Japanese Problem in the United States*, By H. A. Millis, p. 98.)

.....

"Much of the land (farmed by the Japanese in Washington) has been taken as left by the timbermen, the stumps removed, and reduced to cultivation by the Japanese tenants. They have done much to develop the agricultural possibilities of these communities -- more undoubtedly than any other race has shown an inclination to do." (Ibid pp. 91-2.)

* * *

19. **MYTH:** The farming methods of the Japanese ruin the soil and cause the land to depreciate in value.

FACT: This charge is denied by Prof. H. A. Millis, whose book, "The Japanese Problem in the United States", is frequently cited as an authoritative study in the Report of the Tolan Committee. Millis states:

"The complaint that the Japanese 'skin' the land and ruin the orchards is frequently heard. Most of the Japanese are tenants, and tenant farming is likely to have such results. No case can be made against the Japanese as against other tenants, however: On the contrary, while one finds rather numerous instances in which the landowners have been dissatisfied with the Japanese tenants they have had, the general opinion is that the Japanese are good farmers and give rather more than less interest than is usual among tenants to the care and conservation of the properties leased by them. At Sacramento...the president of one large fruit-shipping firm and the treasurer of another said that the Japanese were among the most careful and painstaking orchardists. At Fresno, a prominent American told me that he would rather lease his vineyards to Japanese than to farmers of his own race because they took better care of them. *The charge that the Japanese ruin the farms is a charge, which, like many others, one hears less of the closer he gets to the place where the damage is presumed to have taken place. On the whole the Japanese are regarded as good farmers and good tenants.*" (p. 148.)

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20. **MYTH:** Japanese farmers evacuated from the West Coast have stubbornly refused to release trucks and farm machinery for the use of other farmers who desperately needed such equipment.

FACT: Very little of the farm equipment owned

by the Japanese Americans was left idle when they were evacuated. By far the greater part of it was either sold or leased to the tenants who took over the operation of the farms after the owners departed. On May 8, 1942, the Farm Security Administration, which had charge of the disposal of evacuee-owned farm property, reported that satisfactory disposals had been made of the machinery on all but thirteen farms in Exclusion Area No. 1. It was the policy of the FSA to hold the machinery on the land to the extent that it was needed to keep the land in operation.

Typical of the grossly exaggerated stories that have been spread on the West Coast is one reported to the WRA by an implement dealer in Sacramento, who stated that more than 200 farm tractors, owned by Japanese Americans, were standing idle in storage in the Sacramento Valley area, and that he, himself, knew of approximately 50 idle tractors in the city of Sacramento. A representative of the WRA immediately called upon the dealer, and asked him where the tractors were stored and who was custodian of them. As a result the dealer admitted that he knew of only four tractors; the rest of his report had been based on hearsay.

On another occasion, Senator Sheridan Downey sent to the WRA office a copy of a telegram from the Salinas, California, Chamber of Commerce, which stated that some 500 articles of farm equipment, owned by evacuees, was stored in that vicinity. The telegram declared that the use of the equipment was essential if the farmers of that community were to meet their food production goals.

Again, a WRA representative went immediately to the source of the report and sought the

assistance of the Chamber of Commerce in checking the accuracy of the information. Implement dealers and many others who were presumed to have knowledge of the equipment were interviewed. This survey revealed one tractor, two listers, a ten-foot ring roller, and a land chisel which were in storage -- a total of five (not 500) pieces of farm equipment. The Salinas Chamber of Commerce corrected the erroneous information given to Senator Downey, in a second telegram to him, which received only a fraction of the publicity given to the first.

The report was published in West Coast newspapers that some 33,000 Japanese-owned automobiles were in storage and, consequently, that more than 100,000 tires were kept away from persons needing them. An inspection of the records in the motor vehicle departments in Washington, Oregon, California, and Arizona revealed that only 32,977 motor vehicles were registered to Japanese owners before the evacuation; 18,522 of them had been sold to non-Japanese owners; 3,379 were registered to owners whose names were not included in the evacuation lists (probably voluntary evacuees who took the cars with them); 879 were owned by Japanese outside of the exclusion areas; and 174 were owned by evacuees released from relocation centers. Therefore, only 8,923 (not 33,000) vehicles were recorded as owned by people living in the relocation centers. Of this number, many had been left with dealers to be sold, or returned to dealers by purchasers who owned only a small equity in them; others had been sold and the sales had not been recorded.

These incidents reveal the mythical character of the evidence used as a basis for charges that the evacuees stubbornly refused to sell great quantities of idle equipment. It

should also be noted that any reluctance on the part of the evacuees to part with such property would have had considerable justification. Many of them expected to return to their West Coast homes, and when they returned they wanted machinery to cultivate their land, and trucks and cars to be used in their work.

* * *

21. **MYTH:** The evacuees in the relocation centers have been pampered and coddled, while Americans imprisoned by Japan have received inhuman treatment.

FACT: This charge, which provided the basis for an especially vicious campaign against the WRA in the early part of 1943, was carefully investigated by Governor Maw of Utah. His comment, after a personal tour of the Central Utah Relocation Center, was reported in the Salt Lake City Tribune of January 16, 1945, as follows:

"These Japanese are pioneering a project... They're not living the life of Riley and they're not being pampered. It's not luxury when six persons of a family live in a single room. I found that these thousands are not getting more than their share of coffee, sugar, meat, or any other commodity. The ration regulations are rigidly adhered to by the project director's staff."

Every statement made to support the charge that the evacuees have been pampered has been proved to be untrue. In April, 1943, the War Relocation Authority issued a memorandum refuting a series of accusations published by the Denver Post which was spearheading the attack. Typical of the accusations was a statement that WRA had stored at Heart Mountain "enough food

to supply the 10,300 Japs there for three years, seven months and two weeks."

An actual inventory at the center, made two days after the Post statement was published on April 24, revealed that the food supply was sufficient to last only sixty days, which was the minimum period for safety.

On July 17, 1943, the War Department and the War Relocation Authority issued a joint statement through the *Director of War Mobilization* which read, in part, as follows: "A portion of the food (used in the relocation centers) is produced by the evacuees themselves on government-owned or government-leased land within the project area; some perishable commodities are purchased locally; and practically all other food is brought through the Quartermaster Depots of the Army. *All rationing restrictions applicable to the civilian population are strictly followed and two meatless days are observed each week...Beef served at the centers is third grade and no fancy meats of any kind are furnished. The cost of feeding at the centers over the past several months has ranged from 34 to 42 cents per person per day.*"

The following description of a relocation center was written by a well-known author who investigated the pampering charges in the summer of 1943:

"You may think you have gotten into an Army camp by mistake, for the barracks are built according to regular Army design and construction. True, they were built hastily of green lumber which split apart. The floor boards are not close together...The land is silt, so when the dust storms come, the dust seeps through the crevices into the barracks..."

"The barracks are in blocks. The buildings have been divided into 'apartments', and about 260 men, women, and children live in an average block. The 'apartments' are rooms twenty and twenty-five feet in size, and families of from two to five or more occupy each of them. In each block there are two latrines, one for the men, one for the women; one laundry room, one ironing room. In each block there is a mess hall -- for food is supplied by the government through the Army Quartermaster Corps and eating is communal...

"It is not quite so grim as it was in the beginning. The evacuees, young and old, hearty and frail, had come from the moderate West Coast climate to this desert when the temperature was 120 degrees. The government had offered them their rooms, cots, straw with which to make mattresses, and Army blankets. They had no furniture. They needed soap, brooms, pails, everything. Most of them had to make furniture out of scraps of lumber left when the barracks were finished. After a while those who had furniture at home got some of it moved here. Some got plywood from a mail-order house and partitioned their apartments. In some blocks the men secured air conditioners for the mess halls. The inevitable Japanese gardens began to bloom in window boxes and around the blocks and between them. Most of the comfort you see has been created by the Japanese themselves; it is not donated by the government....At best, this is not the lavish luxury in which many of us have heard that the War Relocation Authority has pillowed the Japanese...

"There is a swimming pool which is merely a wide place in the ditch. From the uproar..., I had expected a marble pool with umbrella-shaded tables beside it and liveried waiters

serving champagne. But it's only a ditch and there is no alcoholic beverages of any sort.... Indeed, there isn't even any soft drink or candy to be had, as a rule... And recreation is whatever the people made for themselves..." (*The Truth About Jap Camps*, by Maxine Davis, Liberty Magazine, Aug. 7, 1943.)

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